

New Character Reminds Us About the Importance of Line Locates

The signs of summer are everywhere with robins singing, flowers blooming, warmer weather, and yes, construction!

In this season of new beginnings, a fictional new character has emerged from the prairie ground.

“His name is Dig Safe Doug,” said Stephanie Pappas, Marketing Manager – Customer Communications. “Doug is a prairie dog born and raised in the fields of Grasslands National Park. He’s now the voice of SaskEnergy, SaskPower, SaskTel, Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance, and Sask 1st Call in encouraging safety and safe digging practices.”

Bringing the public’s attention to the importance of requesting line locates before they dig is nothing new. But market research showed that while awareness of the program was high, and locate requests were increasing, lines were still being hit & damaged.

Enter Doug, who will provide a fun approach to dig up greater attention to a serious topic.

“There's many players here – SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance and Sask 1st Call – and that can be confusing for homeowners and contractors to know where to go and who to contact,” said Stephanie. “We wanted to create a single likeable and relatable personality that makes requesting a line locate more than just an extra step in a digging project's timeline.”

Regardless of how the communication is delivered, the message remains crucial.

“It's important to get a line locate before starting any work that requires digging to know where the power, gas, and telephone lines are,” said Stephanie. “Hitting these lines can interrupt service at the very least, but can be life-threatening in the worst cases. Depending on the scope of the damage, you may even be responsible for the cost of fixing it.”

To make the message even more effective, a new website - digsafesask.com - was also created.

“Through a customer journey mapping exercise, we identified gaps in the journey from deciding to do a digging project to successfully completing it without a line hit,” said Stephanie. “Two thirds of people know they need a line locate, but often don't know what the flags mean or much about safe digging practices.”

“We wanted to create a one-stop website where customers can request a line locate, understand common projects that require a locate, what the flags mean, how to get permission to proceed with a project, and tips & tricks for safe digging.”

“While the Sask 1st Call website will remain, digsafesask.com is where we will drive traffic from our Click Before You Dig campaigns.”

So be watching for Dig Safe Doug during the construction season! Doug will be present across the province on billboards, on-line, on the radio and even surprise appearances in local hardware stores.